

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00
PA-01 USIA-06 PRS-01 SP-02 BIB-01 CU-02 SS-15
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FM AMEMBASSY PRAGUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2406
INFO USIA WASHDC
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE
AMEMBASSY BERLIN
AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BUCHAREST
AMEMBASSY BUDAPEST
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMCONSUL MUNICH
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY SOFIA
AMEMBASSY WARSAW
USMISSION NATO

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE PRAGUE 0881

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: SOPN, PFOR, PINT, CZ
SUBJECT: SALE OF WESTERN PERIODICALS IN PRAGUE

REF: (A) PRAGUE 0860 (NOTAL), (B) STATE 73640 (NOTAL)

1. WESTERN PERIODICALS REPORTEDLY ON SALE IN PRAGUE
(REFTELS) ARE NOT AS EASY TO COME BY AS ONE MIGHT HOPE.
SURVEY CONDUCTED APRIL 5 REVEALED THAT ONLY MAJOR HOTELS
(ALCRON, JALTA, INTERCONTINENTAL) HAVE NON-COMMUNIST
WESTERN PAPERS IN STOCK, AND THESE IN SUPPLIES OF ONE OR
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TWO, NONE MORE RECENT THAN APRIL 2. THE PAPERS WERE:
FINANCIAL TIMES (TOTAL OF 5)
NEUE ZUERICHE ZEITUNG (2)
SUDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG (4)
LE MONDE (3)
DIE PRESSE (1)
LE PEUPLE (1)

IN THE HOTELS THE PAPERS WERE ON PUBLIC DISPLAY AT THE PORTER'S DESK (IN THE HOTEL GIFT-SHOP AT THE INTERCONTINENTAL), AND WERE REASONABLY PRICED IN CZECHOSLOVAK CROWNS (E.G., KCS 4.20 FOR A FOUR-DAY OLD FINANCIAL TIMES OR ABOUT 40 CENTS AT THE TOURIST RATE).

2. BY CONTRAST WITH THE HOTELS, PAPER PERIODICAL SHOPS ON NA PRIKOPE, JUNGMANNOVA AND ZELEZNA STREETS IN PRAGUE HAD NO WESTERN PAPERS IN STOCK. SALESMEN WERE AWARE OF RUMORS ABOUT DISTRIBUTION OF WESTERN PERIODICALS, BUT SAID THEY DID NOT YET KNOW THEMSELVES WHETHER OR NOT THEY WERE TRUE; ONE EXPRESSED HER SKEPTICISM AT THE IDEA.

3. NO COPIES OF INTERNATIONAL HERALD TRIBUNE COULD BE FOUND ON THIS INSPECTION, BUT A VISITING U.S. BUSINESSMAN REPORTED PURCHASING ONE MARCH 30 AT THE INTERCONTINENTAL.

4. COMMENT: WE SUSPECT THAT THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS TO A CZECH'S WALKING UP TO THE PORTER IN A PRAGUE HOTEL AND BUYING A WESTERN NEWSPAPER WILL PROVE AS EFFECTIVE A BARRIER TO DISSEMINATION OF WESTERN NEWS AND OPINION AS ANY PADLOCK. ONCE BOUGHT AND DISCARDED BY A FOREIGN TOURIST, HOWEVER, THE PAPERS WILL PROBABLY SLIP INTO INFORMAL DISTRIBUTION CHANNELS.

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5. THE DELAY IN REACHING THE SALES POINTS, WHICH EXCEEDS NORMAL AIR DELIVERY DELAYS, SUGGESTS THAT PAPERS ARE BEING SCREENED BEFORE RELEASE FOR SALE. END COMMENT.
BYRNE

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NNN

Message Attributes

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Copy: SINGLE
Sent Date: 06-Apr-1977 12:00:00 am
Decaption Date: 01-Jan-1960 12:00:00 am
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
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Format: TEL
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Handling Restrictions: n/a
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